IN THE CLAIMS:

Please CANCEL claim 7 without prejudice to or disclaimer of its subject matter, and AMEND claims 1-3, 8, and 11, as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) A sheet feeding apparatus comprising:

a sheet supporting stand ~~arranged to support~~ which supports a bundle of sheets in an erect posture;

a sheet feeding portion which feeds the bundle of sheets supported by said sheet supporting stand;

a pressure portion which thrusts the bundle of sheets toward said sheet feeding portion during feeding by said sheet feeding portion;

an aligning portion ~~arranged to vibrate~~ which vibrates the bundle of sheets upward and downward and ~~move~~ moves the bundle of sheets in a sheet feeding direction while supporting the bundle of sheets at at least two locations of said sheet supporting stand; and

a hitting portion arranged to be hit against the leading edges of the bundle of sheets moved by said aligning portion[[.]],

wherein said pressure portion is moved to a position in which said pressure portion does not hinder an aligning operation of said aligning portion during the aligning operation of said aligning portion.

2. (Currently Amended) A sheet feeding apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said aligning portion includes ~~a~~ vibrating members ~~member~~ for vibrating the bundle of sheets by repeatedly lifting at least two locations of a bottom portion of the bundle of sheets.

3. (Currently Amended) A sheet feeding apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said vibrating members are ~~member is~~ rotary members ~~member~~ to be rotated in the sheet feeding direction, and a height of a portion of said rotary members ~~member~~ projecting from a surface of said sheet supporting stand is adapted to change in accordance with a rotational angle of said rotary member[[.]], and said vibrating members are retracted to a position in which the portion of said rotary member does not project from the surface of said sheet supporting stand during a non-aligning operation of said aligning portion.

4. (Original) A sheet feeding apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said rotary member has an eccentric cylindrical shape.

5. (Original) A sheet feeding apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said rotary member has a cam shape.

6. (Original) A sheet feeding apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said aligning portion is adapted to remain stationary in a position in which said aligning portion is retracted from said sheet supporting stand, or in a position in which a portion of said aligning portion projects from said sheet supporting stand, when said aligning portion does not align the bundle of sheets.

Claim 7 (Cancelled).

8. (Currently Amended) A sheet feeding apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said hitting portion ~~is retractably disposed downstream~~ has a shutter retractable in the sheet feeding direction, and said ~~hitting portion~~ shutter is moved to a position in which said ~~hitting portion~~ shutter does not hinder movement of the sheet during sheet feeding operation of said sheet feeding portion, while said ~~hitting portion is moved to a position in which said hitting portion~~ shutter is projected into an alignment position to hit against the sheet moved by said aligning portion and ~~hinder move~~ block the movement of the sheet during the aligning operation of said aligning portion ~~in the sheet feeding direction during sheet non-feeding operation~~.

9. (Original) A sheet feeding apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a setting portion arranged to set at least one of operation time of said aligning portion, the number of the vibrations of the bundle of sheets, and a vertical amplitude of the vibrations of the bundle of sheets.

10. (Original) A sheet feeding apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

a detecting portion arranged to detect the amount of the sheets placed on said sheet supporting stand; and

a changing portion arranged to change at least one of operation time of said aligning portion, the number of the vibrations of the bundle of sheets, and a vertical amplitude of the vibrations of the bundle of sheets in accordance with the amount detected by said detecting portion.

11. (Currently Amended) A sheet feeding apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising an instructing portion arranged to instruct whether or not to execute a mode in which the sheets are ~~should~~ not ~~be~~ fed after an aligning operation by said aligning portion.

12. (Original) A sheet feeding apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a separating portion arranged to separate the sheet one by one from the bundle of sheets after aligning operation by said aligning portion.